

# South Carolina Department of Agriculture

## Hugh Weathers, Commissioner



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 3, 2008**

### **Keep Food Safe During Power Outages**

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. Department of Agriculture is providing recommendations for the public to help minimize the potential for foodborne illnesses due to power outages.

Steps to follow to prepare for a possible weather emergency:

- Keep an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer.
- Make sure the freezer is at 0° F or below and the refrigerator is at 40° F or below.
- Freeze containers of water for ice in advance to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator or coolers after the power is out.
- Freeze refrigerated items such as leftovers, milk and fresh meat and poultry that you might not need immediately - this helps keep them at a safe temperature longer.
- Plan ahead and know where dry ice and block ice can be purchased.
- Store food on shelves that will be safely out of the way of contaminated water in case of flooding.
- Have coolers on hand to keep refrigerated food cold if the power will be out for more than four hours. Purchase or make ice cubes now and store in the freezer for use in the refrigerator or in a cooler. Freeze gel packs ahead of time for use in coolers.
- Group food together in the freezer - this helps the food stay cold longer.

Consumers with food safety questions can phone the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854); TTY, 1-800-256-7072. The hotline is available in English and Spanish and can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day.

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